

# The Use of Hypnotism in Medicine



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Is hypnotism to be part and parcel of medical practice?

Judging from what some of the doctors say, it is so useful an aid to medicine that we may expect to see it in the near future packed away in every neatly monogrammed black leather case that accompanies a frock coat.

Judging from what others of the doctors say, it is all one with quackery, with foolery, with fak-

ery. It is not reputable enough to be considered by any physician.

Judging from what all of them say, its use, if it have any, is greatest in the curing of nervous diseases.

In Russia a law has been passed making it a criminal offense to hypnotize or to be an accomplice, aider or abettor in hypnotism. Its advisability is being questioned in France, and the questioning may end with its being made illegal there.

In some of the Eastern cities of our own United States it is being used in the medical colleges and in the hospitals. The San Francisco colleges and hospitals have not as yet adopted it, although some of our physicians are using it in their individual work. What some of the representative doctors think of the whole thing is here given.

Dr. C. C. Kenyon.

I do not favor hypnotism. It is a bad agent in the hands of unprincipled persons, and I think the majority of physicians in good standing disapprove of it. I know there are some good physicians who favor its use, but they are the exception that prove the rule to the contrary.

Its use is so limited, almost entirely to hysterical patients, and it might assist in nervous trouble. It has no curative qualities, and I do not think it has made much progress or headway.

The evil that could be done with the aid of hypnotism is practically unlimited and the good so very limited that on the whole it should better be frowned upon by all, including the medical profession. I have never tried to hypnotize any one, though I have seen something of it. It is not to be depended on and there is very little to recommend it.

Dr. F. W. D'Evelyn.

Hypnotism exists and has always done so. It is coeval with man and the evolution of the higher animal forms, as it is not either in its presence or phenomena solely confined to the former. The weird influence of the Hindoo fakir over the serpent of the field, or in turn, the subtle fascination of the reptile over its paralyzed prey, are in fact based upon the same principle as the experiments of a Paracelsus or a Charcot—viz., the elimination and concentration of a force or influence which pervades life, creating an atmosphere of reflexion—as palpable as it is universal.

It is only the effort to reduce results to a scientific causation that has attracted so much attention to the psychical condition of hypnosis. That this power should have not only a significance but utility is not an illogical conclusion, and any

failure should probably be attributed to our faulty interpretation rather than to lack of functional activity upon part of the force or power.

Hypnotism has been successfully employed as a "medicinal agent," but its field, probably for the reason above stated, is at present limited. If we should define a class of maladies in which it has proved and will likely prove most valuable, we should say it will be that of functional nervous diseases.

In true organic disease its power would essentially be limited to the modification of certain symptoms associated therewith, e. g., pain, sleeplessness, fear. All persons are not equally susceptible, nor must it be concluded that it is only

the "weak-minded" that are amenable; on the contrary, the mentally strong—provided they are passive—often afford the most profound results.

Children are often beneficially treated, not by the method of direct suggestion, which in children is apt to produce a feeling of awe or fear, akin to that begotten by the mention of a bogymen, but by concentration of the mind upon some physical exercise which throws into activity the set of organs—contrary to those employed in producing the morbid phenomena.

The use of hypnotism is not a matter of indifference and demands the same precautions as would be employed in the therapeutics of any potent agent. It is interesting to note a certain phase of auto-infection—a consolatory and flattering character—not infrequently found in willingly hypnotized patients, viz., a power to produce the hypnotic state simply by

staring intently at their reflection in a mirror. These cases surely are paralleled by a large and not unfamiliar class, who so persistently see "self"—ever-reflected self—that they finally rest in the calm and peaceful hypnosis—that amidst all mundane phenomena they are ever IT. Would it not be cruel to awake them?

Dr. George F. Shiels.

It is a very dangerous force, and I do not approve of its use either by physicians or any one else. When put to legitimate purpose it is not of any great benefit either in medicine or surgery. It could not possibly take the place of an anesthetic, although it has been substituted for it in mild operations where the pain would not, even were the patient conscious, be very severe.

It is claimed the British army surgeons in India have used it in amputations, but those are the only operations of that nature reported. For the few good things it can be used there are many bad ones, and the evil far outweighs the good.

It is certainly very interesting as a psychological phenomenon. I have even seen Charcot, the celebrated hypnotist of Paris, make patients change (or apparently do so) complaints. But I object strongly to the subservience of a person's individuality, even though it is for that person's immediate physical benefit. It doubt-

less does some good in cases of morphine and alcoholic habit, but with few great exceptions its benefits are only temporary, and as any one with ordinary intellect and perseverance can learn to hypnotize there is practically no way of controlling its use. The charlatan can use it as well as the physician.

It is a terrible thing to subject children to treatments under hypnotic influence or "suggestion" either for their ailments or behavior. Each one of us is endowed with a free will, and we are responsible for our own actions, and I do not believe any one should take the individuality from another.

I approve of it neither in science nor as a parlor pastime.

Dr. C. Benz.

Of course, anything in excess is bad, medicine of any kind or morphine, but hypnotism cannot possibly hurt the patient and really strengthens him mentally. I have cured cocaine and morphine fiends and also the alcohol habit, and have used it to advantage in la grippe and accouchement, while I find it of great value in nervous trouble.

It could not, perhaps, cure an organic disease, but it would be an assistance in the treatment.

Its repeated use does not weaken the intellect as some suppose; on the contrary in the two hypnosis schools of France they claim it strengthens one mentally.

I have used hypnotism to advantage in my own family, curing, after a few treatments, my little boy of biting his finger nails. Now any one who has a child with this habit, that sometimes clings through life, will realize how almost wonderful such a sudden cure is.

To my mind Christian Science is nothing more than mild hypnotism. The diseases that they cure can always be cured by hypnotism. But neither Christian Science nor hypnotism can cure organic trouble or malignant diseases.

Suggestion is a great aid to physicians, but its drawback is the length of time required. Some people are very slow to come under its influence.

It is already used to a great extent in Germany, but physicians are divided in their opinions, some disapproving strongly of it, while others find it a great aid in the practice of medicine.

Dr. A. A. D'Ancona.

I have used hypnotism a great deal in my practice, and yet I consider its use very limited, almost entirely to nervous and hysterical patients, and I do not think it possible for it to ever take the place of an anesthetic because of the length of time it requires, and also because some are not susceptible to its influence. No one knows what type of person is the most susceptible, as opposites in characteristics and temperament prove both susceptible and resistant. I have used hypnotism on nearly a hundred patients, but it only after all supplemented in a smaller degree medicine. It cannot touch organic trouble, and the length of time consumed in hypnotizing a patient is a great drawback. I do not think the morphine habit can be cured by it.

Dr. J. W. Thorn.

Hypnotism will never take the place of an anesthetic. I have not taken much interest in it because I do not think it is of any benefit in therapeutics, except in cases of nervousness or hysteria. The immense amount of time it takes to treat by hypnotic influence is one thing against it, and its limitations are another.

Dr. Beatrice M. Hinckle.

I consider hypnotism of great benefit and have used it frequently. I use it wherever practicable in nervous and functional trouble, but have also found it of great assistance in accouchement cases. I have never treated a patient for the morphine habit except once, a woman at the jail who was suffering torture, and she was soon quieted by the hypnotic treatment.

I have been able to hypnotize patients quite readily, usually in a few minutes, although some require considerable time and patience. I do not use it at all in organic trouble, for I do not think it can reach such, but in functional complaints and nervousness I have had very good results.

In my own opinion it cannot hurt the patient mentally or physically and is permanent in its good results.

I had one case—a little boy—whose mother was heartbroken that her son should be a thief and a liar. This boy was hypnotized and I commenced treatment, which after a few repetitions resulted in the reformation of this child with criminal tendencies. His improvement was noticeable after one treatment, and after five or six he was a changed boy, obedient, honest and considerate. Imagine his mother's satisfaction at this metamorphosis!

I approve of it neither in science nor as a parlor pastime.

Dr. G. J. Fitzgibbon.

I favor hypnotism to some extent, but its reach is so limited that it really amounts to little or nothing in therapeutics. It can never take the place of an anesthetic. It is good in imaginary diseases, and may assist in functional troubles, but could never be of the slightest use in organic diseases.

It is surprising the number of people who have absolutely nothing the matter with them and yet think that they are seriously sick. Nothing a physician can say to the contrary will disabuse their minds of the idea. For this class of patients hypnotism is a very good thing; outside of such it is of little use. For genuine sickness or ailments, such as constitute the great majority of every physician's practice, it is practically useless.

Dr. Louis Bazet.

Hypnotism! Why, I really never tried it, and have not even seen much of it, so my opinion on it would not amount to anything. Of course, there is such a thing, but I always feel like clasping it with the work of mediums and clairvoyants. It is so associated in my mind, though some physicians approve of it. I do not think the majority favor it. Hysterical patients are about the only class benefited by it.

## Lawmakers and Their Pay.

THE most expensive Parliament in Europe is that of France, which costs \$1,500,000 a year. The French people are very well represented. There are 309 Senators and 584 Deputies, a total in excess of 800. Each receives a salary of \$1800 a year.

In the United States the ninety Senators and 360 Congressmen are paid \$2,500,000 in salaries.

The members of the British Parliament serve without salary. The incidental expenses of this body last year were but \$269,000. The German Reichstag, with its two branches, costs the voters on an average \$100,000 a year.

Russia has no Parliament in the American or French sense, so that this item is entirely saved. The legislators in the Italian Parliament receive no salaries, but have free transportation on railroads. The cost of the Italian Parliament last year, nevertheless, was \$420,000.

The salaries of lawmakers in many parts of Europe seem trifling, according to American standards. In London, for instance, there are 150 members in the upper and 250 in the lower branch. The former get no pay at all and the latter but \$300 a year. And if any session lasts longer than four months they are paid at the rate of \$2 00 a day additional. The Parliament of Holland comprises 150 members in two houses. Members of the Upper House receive 24 a day and of the second body \$800 a year and mileage. The Parliament of Holland costs \$300,000 a year.

The most scantily paid of any of the regularly salaried lawmakers are those of Austria. There are two legislative bodies for Austria, one meeting in Vienna and one in Budapest. The total cost is \$300,000 a year. An Austrian law provides that the members receive 10 florins, or \$2 a day.